

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the amendments above and the following comments.

Claims 16, 18-23, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 31 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Yamakami et al. ("Yamakami"), US 2004/0028895. In response, Applicants respectfully submit that Yamakami is not prior art against the present claims. Yamakami is the publication of USSN 10/636,631, filed on August 8, 2003. However, the present invention predates Yamakami's U.S. filing as proven, for example, by the filing of Applicants' German priority Application No. 102 43 215.5 on September 17, 2002. In order to perfect Applicants' priority claim, Applicants submit a certified English language translation of German priority Application No. 102 43 215.5. In view of this submission, Applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is entitled to the benefit of German priority Application No. 102 43 215.5 and that, as a result, Yamakami is not prior art against the instant claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection. An early notice that this rejection has been reconsidered and withdrawn is earnestly solicited.

Claims 16, 17, 24, 27 and 30 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Okada et al. ("Okada"), JP 10-152658, in view of Mizuno, US 2003/0071941. In response, Applicants respectfully submit that Mizuno also is not prior art against the present claims. Mizuno is the publication of USSN 10/270,662, filed on October 16, 2002. As this

date is also after the filing date of German Priority Application No. 102 43 215.5, the benefit of which the present application is entitled, Applicants respectfully submit that Mizuno also is not prior art against the present claims. Therefore, the combination of Okada and Mizuno is improper.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection as well. An early notice that this rejection also has been reconsidered and withdrawn is earnestly solicited.

Applicants believe that the foregoing constitutes a bona fide response to all outstanding objections and rejections.

Applicants also believe that this application is in condition for immediate allowance. However, should any issue(s) of a minor nature remain, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned at telephone number (212) 808-0700 so that the issue(s) might be promptly resolved.

Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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